2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

posts fixed in the street. On this occasion the young men collect one egg from every house, making fun. One of them "dies", and carrying him into the house, they exorcise him and sing chants: 796 [539]

Above it sounds like scraping,
Below it is stiff:
If you exorcise, let the exorcising take effect,
Otherwise I shall go and plough the sun-grass thicket.

They get one egg and one handful of rice; thereupon the "dead" person quickly comes alive. They act in this way in every house.

When they have finished this, the young men and girls and women do the final functions (dancing and begging) at every house, commencing at the headman's house. Entering the courtyard they sing[28]: [431] •

The Jugis beg
For twelve years;
The young men beg
Just this day;
The young men beg
Just this day. [539]

He does not ask for much,
He does not ask for a little,
He asks for one winnowing-fan of paddy
And one small pot of poured-out beer.

In this way they get paddy, split peas, salt, and beer in house after house. When dancing they sing songs, mutually blaming each other. The young men sing, blaming the girls for having maimed hands, and the girls sing, blaming the young men for having swollen legs; they sing, blaming each other in many ways. When they have finished begging at every house, they give all in charge in the house of the Jog Mṛājhi during the night. They then dance at the last house and sing ḍahar and other songs. [431]

In the mustard, in the mustard they make their nest;
In the middle-sized earthenware pot they make the juice.
In the large basket are rustlingly the straw bundles,
Witness the strong buzzing sound. [539]

The people of this house give them one earthenware pot of beer, twenty cakes, and five seers of flattened and parched rice. This they eat and drink. They call this dew beer. [431]

[28] In corrupt Bihari.

2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

796
[539]

Some say the old man is dead;
Some say he is alive.
Exorcize him slowly, sitting,
Smearing red earth on him.
The old man is fidgeting,
The old man is fidgeting.

[439]

The women do their separate work, clean the ground with cow-dung, make flour, and so on; and after having finished dancing the young men go about and beg for fun's sake. Once they beat the brushwood fences from one end of the village street to the other end, and when they reach the house of the Goḍet, they shut the Goḍet in, closing the door to the village street. The Goḍet then gives them one earthenware pot with beer. Then they open (the door) for him. Thereupon they continue beating right up to the end of the village street. There at the end they make different "dancers" of straw; when they have made these ready, they take them to the house of the village headman. Here they make them dance, and the headman gives them rice. In this way they beg from house to house. When they have done begging, they give what they have begged together in charge in the house of the Jog Māṇjhi. Now all the men go to bathe, taking yokes, battle-axes, and knives along with them. They have their bath and come back.

[782]

Thereupon they sacrifice fowls and pigs in every house. They sacrifice them to Marāṇ buru and to the house-bongas; to the ancestors they fell them. With flour they make the magic squares, two; in the middle of each they put down a small heap of rice and they make five marks of sindur, and on the animal to be sacrificed they sprinkle water and smear sindur on it, on its head, shoulder, and hoofs. Thereupon they let it feed on the rice in the magic square, and they make an invocation: Be greeted then, Marāṇ buru, Father my Ṭhākur, now then, in the name of the Sohrae, I am giving thee, handing to thee offerings, sacrifices; with this mayest thou be pleased, be agreeable; with pleasure, with delight thou wilt receive it, accept it, thou wilt fondle it, consider it great; formerly the ancestors of old received ye, met ye in silk clothes, in sindur-red women's attire; we are inexperienced girls, inexperienced boys, we do not know, do not recognize; in the plastering, in the cleaning with cow-dung, in the observances, in the religious abstinences, some may have been forgotten, been indifferently done; may ye bear it, may ye suffer it all, Father my Ṭhākur. Thereupon they make further invocations; but these I have quoted formerly. They make the same kind of invocation to the house-bongas. And letting the fowls feed on rice on a small leaf-plate they fell them, offering them to the ancestors, and they pour beer on the ground as a libation to Marāṇ buru and the ancestors.

[539]

Having finished the sacrifices they prepare rice and curry. They cook separately the flesh of the animals offered to the ancestors. This they throw down to them together with

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

576 sufficient respect to superiors or to show a corresponding affection to juniors, as would be proper in a common fraternity in the clan. Thus a younger [601] man addresses an elder as 'uncle' and a younger girl will choose to call a senior woman as 'elder sister.'

iii. Between mothers

572 An interesting tie is knit by Santal society between the mothers of an equal number of children. [596] Ceremonials are gone through to establish such [43] forms of friendship, called *Sàika*, when presents are [594] mutually exchanged and each of the friends treats some guests at feasts as a mark of the occasion.

31 Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

into customary laws. The Santal has, in his own way, learned to value the corporate discipline necessary under social life. He has built up his own body of traditions and customs and has appointed proper custodians to look over them, to administer them for the well-being of the tribe on the earth. Nobody expects from the Santal the cultural level we associate with the civilized races in India, but enquirers into their manners and customs must be struck with the correlation of the cultural evolution of the tribe with its material and environmental back-ground, noticed in the previous chapters.

Scholars of Pre-Dravidian life have noticed the communistic aspect of their society. In many instances, this holds true of Santal life. The leadership of the tribe, whether social or socio-religious as exercised by the Headman or the Priest, is exercised with due restraint because of the check imposed by the consultative body known as "*Monren hor*." Thus Santal tribal judgments have that provision for justice and fair-play which all civilised societies crave. That such democratic ideas permeate the whole tribe will be apparent from the practice of offering gifts to the member in whose house there is festival going on. To a people who are remarkably poor like the Santals, this practice lightens the burden of the house-holder, bound by custom to provide community feasts and drinks, apart from

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

105 182 • 431 being an evidence of fraternal virtues of co-operation.

105 181 421 836 Although ideas of individualism have saturated the Santal social fabric and they now own private property, and have personal ownership over many things, communistic ideas in origin can be easily traced in the custom which allows all bachelors of the tribe to have free access and intercourse with the unmarried girls of the tribe barring of course customary prohibited degrees and relations.

105 593 [611] Evidence of discipline in family life can be easily noticed. Their heads of families are held in great esteem and their commands are carried out respectfully. Although the family is patrilineal and patripotestal, the mother has her natural voice in the family-life and women, notwithstanding all their legal disabilities, have their moral rights assured.

105 181 582 Nowhere is the democratic authority of the appointed guardians of the tribe in better evidence than in the cases of marriage regulations. It is in the administration of these that we can see the will of the Santals finds fullest play. We have seen in the foregoing pages how clan-incest is detested and how the erring ones undergo penance and restored to the tribe. It is the tribal council, the sacred repository of all customs and traditions, that maintains intact the tribal solidarity and purity by outcasting the man and woman who have become

[623] [684]

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

843 *Murài aṛak'* (an edible leaf, the radish, *Raphanus sativus*, Linn.), and garlic. The members of the family have no particular food-prohibition during this period.

844 783 184 In the Santal Parganas, the house and village become religiously unclean. No festivals or sacrifices are held in the village nor anybody dines in the house of child-birth till after purification, three or five days after, by the *chàṭiar* ceremony.

Narta (*Name-giving Ceremony*)

553 184 The usual Santal custom is to observe the name-giving ceremony between the third and fifth day after birth. But in Mayurbhanj, some observe it within one year, the date being fixed by the head of the family; while there are others, who may delay it up to the tenth year.

553 574 431 On the date of the ceremony being announced, friends and relatives of the family are invited. They arrive on the day fixed, with presents of rice, cloth, *bàṇḍia* (rice-beer), necklaces of beads (*mala*) and *doṛa* (string worn round the waist, pronounced *dara* by Mayurbhanj Santals) for the new-born child. Now the midwife, who delivered the child, sits with the baby facing east, and with a leaf-cup in front, containing turmeric paste, *mohua* oil and water.

553 982 887 An old man of the village offers the rice-beer presented by others and mixed with the family

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

heads of cattle they require as incidental presents to the bride's family, and the date that would suit them for the marriage ceremony. These being satisfactorily settled, the final date is fixed; the intervening number of days being shown in knots in a rope (*Bapla Gira*). Thereafter, one knot is loosened each night and when there are none, it is the day for marriage.

Rates of Bride-price (gònòn)

Here, some observations as regards the rates of bride-price may prove interesting. Generally speaking, the rate of money payment for buying a bride varies between rupees three to rupees twelve in some quarters. In the Santal Parganas, rupees five is taken to be the average. But at Mayurbhanj, we were faced with two practices, the one insisted on fixed rates as rupees three or five, seven or twelve, whereas, others were disposed to be more elastic as regards any such fixity and even ready to pay more, if financially capable.[1]

As regards the ceremonial presents to the bride's party, if the bride's parents are alive, her father and brother will receive a he-calf each. If her paternal

1. In the Sadar subdivision, Mayurbhanj, bride-price goes up to R. 12. In Bamanghati and Barsai, we gathered, the sum paid does not exceed R. 3.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

584 uncle demands the present of a calf, he has, accord-
• 431 ing to custom, to present in return some ornaments to his niece together with some utensils.

583 Should, however, the bride's father receive so
584 low a price as rupees three for his daughter, we are
431 told that he need not pay anything to the bride-groom or to the village elders on both sides. If, however, he (bride's father) receives or demands big sums like rupees five or twelve, he has to pay the bridegroom various returns in the shape of presents. During our enquiries at Mayurbhanj, one such specific instance came to our notice. This practice is not, however, uniform. Here the bride's father who received rupees twelve as *gònòñ* (*bride-price*) had to present the married couple, two bullocks, a ploughshare, a yoke, a dog, a cat, a maid servant and other utensils and ornaments.

584 There are curious customs regarding the presents
431 of cloths by the bridegroom to his bride's family. One such called, *Boñga Sari*, fourteen cubits in length, has got to be presented to his grand-mother-in-law, even if she happens to be dead. The next one, called *Ma Sari* (twelve cubits), goes to his mother-in-law, dead or alive. Custom has slackened a bit with regard to *Boñga Sari*, should the grand-mother-in-law be dead, but *Ma Sari* is always insisted upon as compulsory. The next cloth, *Here* (eight cubits), is meant as a present to the bride's

31 Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

father's sister. In this case the bridegroom may present only one, even if there be several of them. 584 431

Preparation For Wedding

585 Now preparations for the marriage set the village buzzing with activity. Village elders assemble at the houses of both the bride and bridegroom in the afternoon. The villagers erect sylvan grottos sparkling with leaves and flowers and encircle the place with mango-leaves stuck in coils of strings, and thus decorate the outdoor across the *Kulhi* (village lane). The villagers get six pots of *Hàṇḍia* (rice-beer) from both the parties, two pots for the *ṭakacal* (Betrothal Ceremony), two for *Giratal* and two for *Dharua Ruku* ceremonies to follow just now, when the village elders at the bridegroom's house will ask for the bride-price (*gònòṅ*) and the other ceremonial presents to be made over to them for examination. These include various dues to be paid to the Headman of the bride's party, the wife of the bride's elder brother, the friend of the bride and the vermilion to be applied to the bride's forehead. These, including an uncastrated goat, are thus ceremonially inspected, by the bride's party along with the women-folk present.

The bridegroom is next thrice bathed on a hole in the ground where a pair of yokes have been

B Mukherjea O. Y-1,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

Baba heo haracò, baba hòbòr haracò, 224
Baba nunko tuluc' dògò baba nohoiñ reben ken. 593 533 539

(TRANSLATED)

Daughter-in-law: Father, the sound of (returning from the hunt) perhaps I hear.
Father, the sound I hear perhaps.
Father, I am standing at the front-door with a pot of water by placing it on the palm.

Father-in-law: My daughter, don't you weep. Do not mourn (my girl).
My daughter, I have got a son, your husband will be changed for another of my son.

Daughter-in-law: Father, I have reared him on my lap,
Father, I have embraced him, while (he was) a child.
Father, I am not ready to accept him.

OTHER HUNTS

The *Bahabaske Sendra* follows the method of the *Deshua Sendra* but there is no *Gipitic'*. A specialty is that the Headman is presented with a *kulai* (hare) or *tur* (squirrel), who, in return presents a pot of rice-beer. The *Jarpa Sendra* is a hunt on a smaller scale by members of five or six mouzas. 224 [431]

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

village and who also receive payment in cash and in kind for their work. They are thoroughly familiar with Santali, but their mother tongue is the village Bengali of the area. They observe their own caste rules and do not intermarry with the Santals, with whom they live on excellent terms. They have no part in the Santal village cult, and they make no contributions when collections are made throughout the village for festivals. Their own cult is locally characterized by *Dharma* worship; in one village a post is planted in the ground at the end of the month of *Pus*. On the first day of *Magh* (mid-January) the village Kamar stands on top of this post with a white cock in his hands, and after bowing to the four corners of the compass in turn he releases the cock, saying: "Take, Dharma, we give it to you." There is then a scramble among the Santal spectators to catch it, and the man who does so is rewarded by the gift of a sheep. This ceremony goes on alongside the Santal festival which is taking place at the same time.

Occasionally there are in Santal villages isolated houses belonging to people of other castes. In one village one finds a Muci family, leather workers whose chief occupation is to make and mend drums; in another a Tanti family, who are weavers. The Santals do not have a great regard for the Bauri, the most numerous of the cultivating castes in the area apart from themselves. Their chief complaint about the Bauri is that the latter will eat food left over by anyone, a practice which fills the Santals with horror. On the other hand, there are frequently close friendships between individual Santals and men of other castes. The practice of sealing a friendship by a symbolic exchange of gifts is prevalent, and there are instances where Santals have entered into such friendships with Bauris and, indeed, with folk of other races who are of the same sex. The usual method of cementing such friendships is known as the "flower friendship", which takes the form of an exchange of garlands, followed by mutual salutations and sharing beer or food together. Friendships sealed in this way result in an intimate relationship, a real sharing of burdens as well as of joys.

While some forms of exploitation have been checked, there are still many who appear to thrive on the ignorance of the Santal. I witnessed a scene in the village street of Kuchliaghati when a *Deko* trader was having dealings with the women of the village. He had come to collect from them quantities of resin from the *babla* tree, a species of acacia, and he was paying them by exchanging equal weights of salt for the resin. The

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

759 There are many individuals famed in some degree as physicians. Some are equivalent to the general practitioners of the West, while others are specialists who possess remedies for particular diseases. There are others who might be described as
756 veterinary physicians. When, however, an illness persists the patient and the relatives suspect that some supernatural agency is at work, and they then call in the *ojha*, or magician. The *ojha* is not necessarily a Santal, though there are now so many Santals who are learned in *ojha* art that it is usually possible for a Santal to be called. They are men possessed of special powers who have gone through a period of training, followed by an initiation ceremony at the hands of an *ojha*, and they in turn pass on their knowledge to their own disciples. Tradition says that formerly this training was strenuous and serious. It took the form of a course that lasted from May until October, the time of the *Dàsãĕ*, which is the same as the Dasserah festival of North India and the Durga Puja in Bengal. Throughout this period the disciples had to attend at the house of the *ojha* every evening until
• 431 finally they were initiated. At the conclusion of this ceremony
756 the *ojha* used to take his disciples on a begging expedition through the surrounding villages on three successive days.

These begging parties are a familiar sight in the countryside during *Dàsãĕ*, and they represent almost all that is left of the old initiation schools conducted by the *ojhas*. Every village has its bands of youths who meet each night for a month to practise the songs and dances and then go out to collect rice and cash from the neighbours. It is at this time that the *buaṅ* is used. When the
[292] young men sally forth they are dressed in picturesque fashion. On this occasion alone men are permitted to wear women's dress. They put on *saṛis* shaped like a skirt and a small waistcoat, a garment worn by the women in many parts of North India, though it is not normally worn in Bengal. They also don ear-
[301] rings, bangles and anklets, while on their heads they wear
[292] turbans in which they fasten peacock feathers.

These bands have little relation to the *ojhas* and they operate
756 under their own leaders. One of the links remaining between this
773 practice and the *ojhas* is the reference in some of the songs to the old *gurus* of the magicians, and in particular the original *guru*, a mythological person named Kaṃru. The name may possibly refer to a person who came from the western districts of Assam, a region known as Kamrup, but he is now entirely mythical. He is regarded as the originator of magical knowledge and as belonging to the race of *bongas*. According to one version, he is a

5t Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

His feet are washed in each house and he receives presents of grain and beer. The subsequent merrymaking dies down during the night. The celebration is completed on the following day, when the co-priest offers drops of his own blood to the boundary spirits.

The following account of the Spring festival held in Barikul in 1939 was recorded by Babulal at the time, and it conveys, as no outside account could, the atmosphere of the festival. He begins:

"*March* 17. Today is the bathing day for the Flower festival. Early in the morning the bailiff called everyone to make the booths ready in the sacred grove. The women were busy boiling their clothes. One young man from every house took part in the thatching of the booths; some brought *sarjom* branches from the jungle, and others made small wooden seats for the spirits. The priest washed all the things for the spirits' house –the bangles, the necklace, a bow and arrow, an axe, also basket, broom, bells and horns—and he brought back to his house an earthen pot of water for luck. The place of sacrifice was smeared with cowdung, and oil and vermilion were placed there in readiness. When the young men had finished the thatching they bathed, and then said to the bailiff: 'We go now to Sonadungri for the flower hunt; see that the drums beat and the horns sound at the foot of the banyan tree, for when we hear them we shall start. Do not delay, for we want to begin.' The bailiff completed his bath quickly, and taking four youths with the drums and the horns to the banyan tree by the stone fence he did as he had been requested. And so the youths went out hunting. They caught fourteen hares, thirteen jungle fowl, four partridges and ten squirrels. These they brought home hanging from a pole which was slung from the shoulders of two men. When they arrived back at the side of the large tank, the spoils were divided, and some we gave to the men of neighbouring villages who had joined in the hunt. The flesh was roasted and divided; some was given to the killers, some to the dogs, some to the villagers, and a special portion to the widows.

In the evening the bailiff called everyone to gather for the 'spirit possession'. We took three new winnowing fans and all collected at the priest's house. Three men were possessed, and each of them took hold of a winnowing fan. They were seated facing the east, and the priest put sun-dried rice on to the winnowing fan of *Marañ Buru*. Immediately to his left sat *Mañjhi*

[i.e. the priest.-Analyst]

St Colshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

basket on her head; likewise *Marañ Buru* took the bow and arrows and *Mañjhi haram* held the axe. Just before sunset the men came to their senses, the priest gathered up all the things, and his wife carried the lucky water-pot. As before, the youths and maidens placed the priest in their midst and again the spirits came and danced with the others. Then in every house, from one end of the village street to the other, they washed the feet of the priest. He put *sarjom* flowers into the hair of the girls who washed his feet, and all the people sprinkled water on to each other. On that day we are free to sprinkle water on anyone else.[1] When we reached the priest's house he poured out two pots of beer and we all drank. Again the dancing began and went on till a late hour.

March 18. Yesterday was the full Flower festival day; today is the 'stale' day of the feast. Yesterday everyone was drunk, and again today they began to drink early. There were many visitors in the village, for we had invited daughters, sisters and sons-in-law to be with us. We had to feed them well, and we were busy with all the preparations. One prepared rice, another flour, while the men killed cocks or goats or pigs, for yesterday they had no time to feast well. Even so, in some of the houses a few people became drunk before they had time to eat. Those unfortunates had no meat either yesterday or today. Most of the time went in feasting, though there was some dancing in the village street, and the dancers sang:

> Let us gather, O elder sister, the *matkom*;
> Let us wear the *sarjom* flowers, elder sister, in our hair;
> Let us drink, O elder sister, the juice of the *matkom*.[2]

Most of the singing was done by a small band of old men and women who went into each of the houses and were given beer and *matkom* flowers by the people of the house. In our part of the village there was a fierce quarrel. Some of the men who went to stop the trouble were themselves beaten and returned very angry to their homes. Before midnight everyone was fast asleep, for all had been drinking heavily. I thought to myself, if anyone came here tonight with evil intent he could steal anything he wanted with the greatest ease; and, in fact, that is what happened. During the night someone stole from the headman's house five goats, male and female."

[1] Water "squirts" are made from bamboo and are used freely.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 18.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

They are all the more important because some of them are things that a boy and girl would never do publicly together."[1] Among the Santals many of the symbolic acts cannot be truly interpreted apart from their relation to the unseen world. The invocations used in addressing the spirits at the time of marriage come as near to true prayer as any used at other times.[2] Before the wedding party leaves the bridegroom's village for the home of the bride, the bridegroom's father provides a hen for the village priest, who offers it in the sacred grove. He prays: "We offer to you a hen because of the marriage booth. Accept it, enjoy it and grow big. Now we are about to go as a marriage party to such and such a village. Guard us so that on the way through the forest there may be no sudden fright, no tripping, no tumbling, no spells, no enchantments. Clear the way for us to right and to left, O father spirits. There we shall eat and drink. May we suffer no stomach pains, no head pains. Guard us also so that there be no quarrels, no bickerings, no divisions, no disturbances, no ruin, no spoiling between relations."

Before the marriage, booths are erected in the courtyards of both homes, and all the villagers assist in the work. Straw ropes are strung from side to side in the village street with mango leaves inserted through the strands, and the courtyards are decorated in the same manner. The posts of the booths are made with branches of the *matkom* tree. In the floor a hole is dug in which some fresh turmeric mixed with sun-dried rice, five cowrie shells and three leaves of *dhubi*[3] grass are buried. These are covered in and then the whole floor is plastered with cowdung. The young men who build the booth are feasted and provided with beer. On the day before setting out for the bride's village the bridegroom's party go to the village bathing place for the "water marriage". One of the young men digs a small hole at the water side into which the water can seep and three arrows are planted round the hole. Vermilion is placed on the arrows, while at their base are placed some cowrie shells and a hen's egg. One of the women shoots at the water with an arrow, while another strikes it with a "sword", generally a stick. Then libations of beer are poured out to *Marak Buru* and the ancestors before all present partake. Finally, water is drawn in pots and taken to the home. Again when they reach the courtyard another hole is dug, the arrows are placed round it and the water

[1] V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, p. 203.
[2] One example has been quoted in Chapter 6, p. 67.
[3] *Cynodon dactylon*, Pers. Reg.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

iron bangle on her wrist and iron betel nut crackers in her hand. Then they are led inside the house, where they are set down and fed on a dish of black beans and rice. The bridegroom has to make a show of refusing to eat until the bride's father presents him with a rupee.

The party outside begin to drink beer that is variously named by the different groups. The bride's fellow villagers drink beer "in honour of the guests", while the bridegroom's fellow villagers drink "in honour of the new relations"; the young people are permitted to drink "dew beer" that will help them to avoid the chill they might otherwise contract by dancing and drumming through the whole night. While a feast of goat's meat curry and rice is being prepared the guests sit around and talk and sing. The headmen of the two villages, however, have some work to complete. The presents from the bridegroom's family are handed over by their headman to the bride's headman. These are for the most part clothing. The *boiŋa iṭąt'* is a cloth of twelve cubits for the sister of the bride's father. *Iṭąt'* is a word that ordinarily means food left over on the plate of one who has eaten; perhaps it is applied to these presents in the sense that they are left over when the bride price has been given and received. The bride's mother receives a cloth of eleven cubits. The grandmothers receive cloths of ten cubits known as the *here iṭąt'*, or husks. The bride's father may receive a cow, and her maternal uncle is given a money fee, it is said, instead of a cow. The amount given is small, usually a few annas. The headmen themselves receive a half-rupee each, the *jogmąñjhi* receives a loin-cloth and the *goḍet'* one anna, while the anointing maidens receive a half-anna each. In this way the special duties and responsibilities of various parties to the wedding are acknowledged. The bride's maternal grandmother is made to "pay" for her cloth. She does so by presenting five small measures of rice, five sticks of turmeric and five rolled cheroots to the bridegroom's headman, all being wrapped in a bundle together. The bride price that is paid at this time is also paid through the headmen. Many of the presents and fees are known by hidden names. The bride price is called the "milk tree", a term that is also used sometimes for a mother; the fee received by the headmen is known as the "tree of the sacred grove"; the cloth for the bride's mother is called "hot water".[1]

When the feasting is over the bridegroom's party gets ready to leave and the members are escorted to the end of the village street. There once more they sit down and a final beer-drinking

[1] See Chapter 4, p. 48, for other examples connected with marriage.

Sr Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

765 within which three vermilion spots are made. The one who floats away the bones should be the one who placed fire to the mouth of the corpse at the burning. He changes his clothes and walks forward until he is quite covered by deep water. He then faces towards the east and releases the bones into the current together with the blood-besprinkled grains of rice. When he comes out of the water a further offering is made of earth from the river bank. This is placed on leaves and floated away with an invocation to the ancestors asking them to receive the spirit of the dead person. This done, the members of the party take a meal by the river bank, eating flattened rice and cakes that they have brought with them. They leave some of the food for the attendants and set out on their homeward way.

Babulal gave an account of the return of the Barikul party on August 18, 1939. He records that it was a hot day and the maize in the homestead fields was fast ripening. "Very early today those who had gone to the river returned to the village. We could hear them cry out '*Horibol, Horibol*'. When they arrived, the *manjhi* and the *godet*' called everyone together and we washed the feet of the travellers. One person from each house [431] went to wash their feet, and in return they received a gift of sweetmeats from a parcel that the travellers had brought home with them. When the washing was finished each one went to his own house to drink beer, and then the mothers asked their sons: 'O my boy, at which place did you float away your father?' They replied saying: 'At the *Tel kupi* and *Tirio ghats*.' So all the people asked for news of their dead kinsfolk and took a meal, and then in the afternoon they went about their work." *Ghat* is the Bengali word for a landing place on the side of a river, and Babulal names in his account two of the places to which the Santals of the area go. *Tel kupi* is a small earthenware pot used for carrying oil, and *tirio* we have met before, as it means a flute, but I have not obtained any explanation of the names. The former name is a hybrid expression, for *tel* is a Bengali word, while *kupi* is Santali; the ordinary Santali word for oil is *sunum*.

765 The final feast takes place after the return from the river. It is known as *bhaṇḍan* and is in accordance with the means of the family concerned. When the guests have come together, three of the young men are possessed by the spirits of the dead person, the founder of the village and *Marak Buru* respectively. On this occasion the spirits are asked if they are satisfied with all that has been done, and they are expected to give their assent. The [769] [782] animal set aside for the *bhaṇḍan* is offered to the spirit of the